



ALASKA WIC VENDOR TRAINING NEWSLETTER

State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services
Office of Children's Services
Family Nutrition Services / WIC Program
Internet: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/nutri/WIC>

Volume 7, Issue 1
January
2007

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Please post this
where it will be seen and
read by employees.
This newsletter serves as
required vendor
training.



Infant Formula Update

Mead Johnson Nutritionals, the maker of the Enfamil family of formulas, will stop making and shipping Enfamil with Iron (without Lipil) in all sizes and forms by May 31, 2007.



Alaska WIC started the transition to Enfamil Lipil w/iron last April. All vendors who are not exempt from stocking infant formula must have the required minimum stock of the following currently approved infant formulas:

Enfamil Lipil w/iron, conc, 13 fl oz
Enfamil Lipil w/iron, pwd, 12.9 oz.



Prosobee Lipil, conc, 13 fl oz.
Prosobee Lipil, pwd, 12.9 oz



Lactofree Lipil, pwd, 12.9 oz.



Please refer to the most current list of required minimum stock. (included with this newsletter)

~ Coming Soon ~ New WIC Food Lists

The Alaska WIC Program is revising the WIC Approved Food List. Revised food lists will be mailed in February to all WIC vendors. The planned effective date is March 1, 2007. During a three month transition period, through May 31, WIC participants may use the old or the new food list.



Current - Food List March 1, 2005 New - Food List March 1, 2007

Summary of Changes:

- **Deleted Cereal**
 - ✓ Heinz Infant Cereal
- **New Approved Cereal**
 - ✓ Nature's Goodness Infant Cereal
- **New Approved Juices - 11.5 oz. Pourable Concentrate**
 - ✓ **Juicy Juice:** Any Flavor - 100% Juice/Blend
- **New Approved Juices - 12 oz. Frozen Concentrate**
 - ✓ **Flavorite:** Apple ✓ **IGA:** Apple & Orange
 - ✓ **Old Orchard:** Any Flavor - 100% Juice/Blend
- **New Approved Juices - 46 oz. Can**
 - ✓ **Flavorite:** Apple, Tomato & Vegetable
 - ✓ **IGA:** Grapefruit, Pineapple, Tomato & Vegetable
 - ✓ **Fred Meyer:** Pineapple, Tomato & Vegetable
 - ✓ **Safeway:** Orange, Grapefruit, Pineapple, Tomato & Vegetable

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- **March 1, 2007- New WIC Food List Effective**
- **March 1, 2007 - Price Sheets Due - NO Exceptions!!! (most current form attached)**
- **April 2007 - Next Newsletter**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Failure to maintain the required minimum quantities of WIC foods can result in an inventory audit by the State WIC agency

Vendors may be identified as candidates for an inventory audit in several ways.

Examples are:

- ◆ Vendors who have accrued penalty points for program violations, based on the severity and nature of the violation and whether they had repeated offenses over a period of time.
- ◆ Vendors about whom multiple complaints have been received from WIC participants, particularly complaints about vendor not having enough stock of WIC foods.
- ◆ Vendors who have a high incidence of warrant redemption errors and monetary claims.
- ◆ Vendors identified through the State WIC agency's analysis of warrant redemption patterns and prices that uses a variety of indicators to determine which vendors are in the "high risk" category.



What is an Inventory Audit & what is required of the vendor?

An inventory audit is when WIC staff review the store's orders & inventory records to determine if the quantity of WIC foods ordered supports the volume of WIC sales during a specified time period.

All authorized WIC vendors are required to make available to the State agency upon request: original copies of invoices or receipts for all WIC eligible foods, including infant formula, ordered during the specified time period.

WIC vendors must maintain inventory and sales records used for Federal tax reporting purposes, and other records required by the State agency, for a minimum period of 3 years.

In Alaska, inventory audits are primarily used to conduct compliance investigations of smaller stores located in more remote areas and/or in small communities. In these stores, it may not be feasible to do "undercover" compliance buys because any stranger to the community will stand out.

What are "authorized" WIC foods?

The State WIC agency selects specific types, brands and/or sizes of food items authorized for the WIC program in Alaska. The foods must meet federal nutrition criteria, (such as vitamin or mineral content or low sugar or fat content). Other factors considered are price and availability at WIC vendors throughout Alaska. The program aims to provide participants with choices, but to ensure food costs are reasonable and competitive in order to serve as many participants as possible.

The types and quantities of foods approved for purchase by WIC participants are listed on their WIC warrants. The specific brands and types of foods they may buy are described on the Alaska WIC Food List. Any non-food item or any food that is NOT printed on the warrant or on the Food List is "unauthorized."

It is a serious violation of WIC rules for a vendor to sell "unauthorized" items to WIC participants, whether it is intentional or not. Each occurrence can result in 50 penalty points. If the State agency determines a vendor has a pattern of providing unauthorized food items in exchange for WIC warrants, federal regulations require a mandatory one-year disqualification from the Program.

During "undercover" compliance buys in Alaska, cashiers have occasionally allowed the following "unauthorized" items to be purchased: 1) Cereal brands or varieties not on the WIC Food List or combinations that exceed 36 ounces; 2) Infant formula types, brands, sizes or quantities different than what is printed on warrant; 3) Juice in 64 oz cartons or plastic bottles; and 4) Sliced Swiss and Cheddar cheese. *Can you explain why these purchases should not have been allowed?*

Q & A

What can store employees do if a WIC customer attempts to buy unauthorized food items?



- Explain that the WIC Program allows only the foods printed on the warrant (and authorized by the Food List) to be purchased. (Refer to the WIC Food List)
- Explain that your store could be penalized for selling unauthorized foods or non-food items.
- Offer to help the customer choose the correct foods.
- If a WIC customer becomes abusive or threatening, report it to your manager and complete a WIC Program Complaint Report so WIC staff can follow-up with the participant.

One responsibility of being a WIC vendor is to make sure only "WIC approved foods" are purchased by participants. Every cashier should have a copy of the Food List and refer to it when questions come up. If the Food List does not provide the answer, the local or State WIC agency may be contacted for assistance.

Vendor Staff Contact Information

Vendor Coordinator, Christine Blanchfield (907) 465-8630
christine_blanchfield@health.state.ak.us

Ass't Vendor Coordinator, Diane VanEpps (907) 465-4704
diane_vanepps@health.state.ak.us

Admin Clerk, Coriann Fischer (907) 465-3388
coriann_fischer@health.state.ak.us